

What is claimed:

1. A device for stacking an incoming sheet stream, the device comprising:
  - a sheet conveying device that feeds sheets to be stacked;
  - a receiver device adapted to support a stack of the sheets;
  - a separating element for separating the stack into a collected stack and a pre-collected stack, whereby the collected stack can be removed before the pre-collected stack is removed;
  - a holding device for holding the pre-collected stack;
  - the holding device comprising a first crossbeam and a plurality of holding elements arranged on the first crossbeam;
  - a separating table adapted to receive the pre-collected stack during stack changing;
  - a forward guiding device adapted to at least one of guide the stack and align the stack; and
  - a rear guiding device adapted to at least one of guide the stack and align the stack,wherein the rear guiding device comprises a movable guide arrangement adapted to move vertically relative to a plane of the separating table.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the device is adapted to stack sheets made from at least one of paper, cardboard, foil, a flexible material, and a rigid material.
3. The device of claim 1, wherein the device is adapted to stack sheet received from a size cutter.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein the sheet conveying device comprises a feed belt.

5. The device of claim 1, wherein the receiver device comprises a pallet.
6. The device of claim 1, wherein the forward guiding device comprises a forward front stop and wherein the rear guiding device comprises a rear detector.
7. The device of claim 1, wherein the plane of the separating table comprises a planar surface of the separating table.
8. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement is adapted to move in a direction that is generally perpendicular the plane of the separating table.
9. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement is adapted to move vertically up and down relative to the plane of the separating table.
10. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of spaced apart telescoping members.
11. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of spaced apart telescoping rails.
12. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of telescoping devices which can move in a linear direction.
13. The device of claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of telescoping devices comprises an axis and wherein each of the plurality of telescoping devices moves along the axis.

14. The device of claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of telescoping devices comprises a plurality of elements which slide within each other and which move between an extended position and a retracted position.

15. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of devices which change in length between at least an extended position and at least a retracted position.

16. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of devices which change in length between at least an expanded length position and at least a contracted length position.

17. The device of claim 1, further comprising a second crossbeam arranged in a region of the sheet conveying device.

18. The device of claim 17, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises a plurality of length changing devices.

19. The device of claim 18, wherein each of the plurality of length changing devices comprise an end which is at least one of connected to and attached to the second crossbeam.

20. The device of claim 19, wherein each of the plurality of length changing devices comprise another end which is at least one of connected to and attached to the first crossbeam.

21. The device of claim 20, wherein each of the plurality of length changing devices comprises a telescoping device which can move in a linear direction.

22. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device comprises a telescoping rail.

23. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device comprises elements which moved in and out of each other in a vertical direction relative to the plane of the separating table.

24. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device comprises elements which move in and out of each other in a vertical direction relative to the plane of the separating table and which can move with movement of the first crossbeam.

25. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device comprises elements which move in and out of each other upon movement of the first crossbeam.

26. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device is attached firmly to the second crossbeam and is adapted to move with the first crossbeam.

27. The device of claim 26, wherein the first crossbeam is adapted to move back and forth along a transport direction.

28. The device of claim 27, wherein the transport direction is generally parallel to the plane of the separating table.

29. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device is connected to the first crossbeam by a bolt and sleeve connection.

30. The device of claim 21, wherein each telescoping device is movably connected to the first crossbeam by a bolt and sleeve connection.

31. The device of claim 1, wherein the first crossbeam is adapted to move back and forth along a transport direction.

32. The device of claim 31, wherein the transport direction is generally parallel to the plane of the separating table.

33. The device of claim 1, wherein the movable guide arrangement comprises members made of a material with high rigidity.

34. The device of claim 1, wherein the device comprises a modular arrangement.

35. A method of changing stacks of sheets using the device of claim 1, the method comprising:

feeding the sheets onto the receiver device with the sheet conveying device;  
separating with the separating element the stack of sheets into a collected stack and a pre-collected stack;

holding with the holding device the pre-collected stack;  
moving the separating table between the pre-collected stack and the collected stack;

removing the collected stack and the receiver device;  
arranging another receiver device below the separating table;  
moving the separating table away from a position between the pre-collected stack and the other receiver device;

moving the first crossbeam away from the pre-collected stack and in a direction that is generally parallel to the plane of the separating table; and

supporting the pre-collected stack on the other receiver device.

36. A method of continuously changing stacks of sheets using the device of claim 1, the method comprising:

feeding the sheets onto the receiver device with the sheet conveying device;  
separating, during the feeding, with the separating element the stack of sheets into a collected stack and a pre-collected stack;

holding, during the feeding, with the holding device the pre-collected stack;  
moving, during the feeding, the separating table between the pre-collected stack and the collected stack;

removing, during the feeding, the collected stack and the receiver device;  
arranging, during the feeding, another receiver device below the separating table;

moving, during the feeding, the separating table away from a position between the pre-collected stack and the other receiver device;

moving, during the feeding, the first crossbeam away from the pre-collected stack and in a direction that is generally parallel to the plane of the separating table; and

supporting, during the feeding, the pre-collected stack on the other receiver device.

37. A device for stacking an incoming sheet stream, the device comprising:

a sheet conveying device that feeds sheets to be stacked;

a movable separating device comprising separating fingers that separate the sheets into a first upper stack and a second lower stack, whereby the second lower stack is removed before the first upper stack;

a movable holding device comprising a first cross-member and a plurality of support elements arranged on the first cross-member;

a movable separating device adapted to receive the first upper stack during stack changing;

a forward guiding device adapted to guide stacking of the sheets;

a rear guiding device adapted guide stacking of the sheets;

the rear guiding device comprising a plurality of movable guide devices which move up and down,

wherein the device is adapted to stack sheets made from at least one of paper, cardboard, foil, a flexible material, and a rigid material.

38. A device for stacking an incoming sheet stream, the device comprising:

a sheet conveying device that feeds sheets to be stacked;

a movable separating device comprising separating fingers that separate the sheets into a first upper stack and a second lower stack, whereby the second lower stack is removed before the first upper stack;

a movable first cross-member and a plurality of support elements arranged on the first cross-member;

the movable first cross-member and a plurality of support elements being movable towards and away from stacked sheets and being movable up and down;

a non-movable second cross-member;

a movable separating device adapted to receive the first upper stack during stack changing;

a forward guiding device adapted to guide stacking of the sheets;

a rear guiding device adapted guide stacking of the sheets;

the rear guiding device comprising a plurality of movable guide devices which move up and down; and

each of the plurality of movable guide devices comprising one end connected to the first cross-member and another end connected to the second cross-member,

wherein the device is adapted to stack sheets made from at least one of paper, cardboard, foil, a flexible material, and a rigid material.